



INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

- This year's *Special Report on Education* highlights the class-size and voucher issues, as well as details on the state education budget.
- This being one of my most successful sessions to date, I have included an update on how my sponsored legislation fared this year.
- With the legislature approving another record state budget, I have included a summary of the distribution of money so you can see how your taxpayer dollars are being spent.

Larcenia J. Bullard

2006 Legislative Newsletter



Dear Friends:



The 2006 Legislative Session quickly became one of the most unique sessions in the modern legislature. With Governor Bush on his last year of office, emotions ran high as the legislature navigated through the many contentious "legacy" issues brought before it. This newsletter will provide a summary of those issues, and a description of our state's record \$71.3 billion budget.

Our state's public education system was the topic of much heated debate as two proposed constitutional amendments, regarding state class-size requirements and state vouchers for private schools, came before the legislature. We also approved a \$1.8 billion increase in public school funding, bringing the total education budget to a record \$23 billion. You can find more information on education issues in the

Special Report on Education inside.

The legislature also tackled the plethora of concerns relating to the state's overall hurricane preparedness. My fellow lawmakers and I passed legislation to help Florida's citizens, businesses, and government prepare for another active hurricane season.

I hope this newsletter will allow you to have a better understanding of what your public officials are doing in Tallahassee. It is an honor to serve as your state senator, and I urge you to contact my office if there is a state-related issue that I may assist you with.

Sincerely,

Larcenia J. Bullard

State Senator, District 39

District 39 Office:

8603 S. Dixie Highway,
Suite 304
Miami, FL 33143

Phone: (305) 668-7344
Fax: (305) 668-7346
Statewide Toll-free:
1-866-234-3734

Capitol Office:

218 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Phone: (850) 487-5127

Website:
www.flsenate.gov

Legislative Assistants:

Tiffany Johnson
Thomas Barr, Jr.

Merdochey LaFrance

Ryan Hawkins

Email:
bullard.larcenia.web@flsenate.gov



Senator Bullard and Representative Ed Bullard discuss issues with their constituents

State Funding, Class-Size, and Private Vouchers

A Special Report on Education

Education issues remained my primary concern during the 2006 Legislative Session. It was my intention to address the concerns of my constituents by fighting for increased classroom funding and more competitive teacher salaries. As the single legislator from Miami-Dade County on the Education Appropriations Committee, I was able to argue to turn a proposed \$70 million funding increase for Miami-Dade County Schools into a substantial \$135 million increase. I also assisted in helping secure funding increases for each of the six counties I represent, ranging from 5.4 percent to as high as 12.9 percent.

Two of the most hotly debated issues in the state education policy were

brought before the legislature this year: two constitutional amendments that would have weakened Florida's class-size requirements and opened the door for the creation of an endless number of private school voucher programs. I opposed both of these schemes. With the help of my fellow lawmakers, we were able to defeat both amendments. I felt that the class-size requirements approved by voters in 2002 should not be compromised, and private voucher language should be kept out of the state constitution. There is absolutely no advantage in taking more

Improving the educational opportunities at our state community colleges and universities was also one of my primary objectives this year. My fellow lawmakers and I also took advantage of this year's budget surplus to help limit the regular state tuition increase to a modest 2.5 percent for community colleges and 3 percent for state universities.

I feel that this year was a good year for our state's public education system. The legislature was able to thwart two attempts to undermine the integrity of our public schools by defeating the private voucher constitutional amendment and keeping the voter-approved class-size limits intact. Though there is still much more work to be done, I can promise that providing the absolute best education for our children will remain my top priority.

County	06-07 Total Funding	Increase
Broward	\$1,802,544,363	7.28%
Collier	\$336,260,850	12.89%
Miami	\$2,429,227,086	5.41%
Hendry	\$50,944,624	10.61%
Monroe	\$67,070,632	6.82%
Palm	\$1,225,007,946	8.50%

money away from our public schools with increased private voucher programs.

"There is absolutely no advantage in taking more money away from our public schools with increased private voucher programs"

District Highlights

Collier County—The Senate passed a bill (SB 1074) that would exempt obsolete farm equipment from property tax and sent it to the House. The vote was unanimous. I along with fellow legislators secured ongoing funding for the continued construction on I-75 from the golden gate parkway to South of Bonita Beach road totaling \$6,193,800. A total of \$4,852,369 was appropriated for US 41 from SR29 to Chris's canal.

Hendry—\$445,996 was appropriated for workforce education programs for public schools and \$500,000 was appropriated for a water treatment facility.

Monroe—SB 1980 was passed as a measure of an initial step in trying to respond to a state insurance market that has been left in shambles by eight hurricanes over the past two years. Consumers will see the most immediate benefit from the decision to use \$715 million from a budget surplus to offset a \$1.73 billion deficit in Citizens Property Insurance, the state's insurer of last resort. The law also allows the remainder of the deficit to be paid off over the next 10 years, further reducing the cost to property insurance policyholders statewide who are responsible for Citizens' deficits. The provision will save consumers about \$200 a year per \$1,000 of premium.

Palm Beach—I along with fellow legislators appropriated \$250,000 for Belle Glade Hazardous waste cleanup and \$4,759,419 for the resurfacing project of US 441 from Avenue E to Canal Street.

Miami Dade—The Senate without any debate passed and adopted a measure that would renew the popular back to school sales tax "holiday" for another year.

Broward—\$735,000 was appropriated for hurricane projects.

Serving My Constituents and Bringing Results

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A Review of My Legislation



Senator Bullard presenting SB 1022 to the media outside Senate Chambers

It is a pleasure to call the 2006 Legislative Session one of the most successful ever for my personal legislation. The success of my legislation is my principal goal because the legislation that I file is on behalf of you. My constituents.

Below is a brief synopsis of some of my legislation that was adopted during this year's legislative session that would effect Monroe County.

SB 678—Using Vacant State-Owned Buildings as Emergency Shelters

With each hurricane season being seemingly worse than the last, and with much of my constituency living along Florida's coast, the need for a

reliable emergency shelter system is of key importance to my district. Senate Bill 678 will require the state to compile a list of unoccupied,

state-owned buildings that are suitable for use as emergency shelters. The bill will require that the buildings meet the applied standards of the American Red

SB 308 - Osun's Village Designated

Legislation was sponsored to designate a portion of NW 7th Avenue between NW 54th Street and NW 60th Street in Miami Dade

and NW 79th as "African Caribbean Cultural Arts Corridor." This will serve as a boost for businesses in the area and trans-

will erect suitable markers that will give these two areas a high visibility for economic growth.

Special Report: 2006 Legislation for the Glades Area

I had taken a considerable interest in regards to South Bay, Belle Glade and Pahokee areas in the wake of last year's turbulent hurricane season. Recognizing the need for clean water and sewer projects I worked hard along with fellow legislators to ensure that those dollars remained in the state budget. \$1 million for the South Bay water treatment plan and HB 5001, which desig-

nates \$514 million for affordable housing, are two economic development programs that will assist in infrastructure development. While these dollars are not seen directly allocated to municipalities administrators must apply for these dollars as earmarked by the Palm Beach County Budget. Unfortunately, my effort for a \$200,000 allocation to Palm Beach Community College

to create a new apprenticeship program at the school's Belle Glade campus was not approved by the Governor. I fought tirelessly for the funding but to no avail. Overall, Palm Beach County fared well in this past 2006 session.

"The success of my legislation is my principal goal because the legislation that I filed is on behalf of you, my constituents."

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...

I had the pleasure of proposing legislation to designate *Key Lime Pie* as the official state pie of the State of Florida. In what became a very contentious atmosphere in the Florida Legislature, I felt it would be an excellent idea to

lawmakers remember that no matter what issue might be brought before us, there are still some things that make this state unique and help bind all of its citizens together as Floridians.



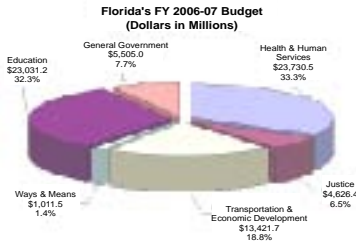
Florida's new official tart treat!

BUDGET REPORT: FLORIDA'S \$71.3 BILLION BUDGET

The Legislature approved another record budget for the State of Florida totaling \$71.3 billion. The legislature continued to meet the increasing demand for important priorities like health and welfare services, new prison construction, and hurricane preparedness by providing record budgets for Health & Human Services (\$23.7 billion), Justice and Law Enforcement (\$4.6 billion), and Transportation & Economic Development (\$13.4 billion).

The state education budget was a record \$23 billion. It will provide increased funding for many items important to improving our public schools. We appropriated and additional \$644

million to help reduce class-size so the constitutional requirement will be met. We also continued to fund many of the important financial assistance programs



that help Florida's high school students attend college. The legislature allocated \$346.3 million to the Bright

Futures program, an 11.1 percent increase from last year, \$120.7 million to the Florida Student Assistance Grants, a 21.9 percent increase, as well as an \$8.6 million increase for the Florida Resident Access Grant to help increase the award level to \$3,000 per student.

The legislature also funded \$20 million for much needed wastewater projects in the Florida Keys, \$160 million for Everglades and Lake Okeechobee restoration initiatives, and \$1 million for the Florida Association of Food Banks and the very successful Farm Share program.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

State Telephone Directory	(850) 488-1234	Domestic Violence	(800) 500-1119	Insurance Consumer Helpline	(800) 342-2762	Tax Forms	(850) 922-9645
Adoption	(800) 962-3678	Elder Helpline	(800) 963-5337	Labor Law Information	(800) 342-3450	Tax Information	(850) 922-4827
Banking & Finance Complaints	(800) 848-3792	Food Stamp Fraud	(800) 342-9274	Licensing Info-Business & Professional	(850) 487-1395	Taxpayer Services	(850) 488-6800
Charitable Organizations	(800) 435-7352	Governor's Office	(850) 488-4441	Licensing Info-Health Care Professions	(850) 488-0595	Telephone No Solicitation List	(850) 410-3680
Child Abuse Hotline	(800) 962-2873	Health Care Complaints	(888) 419-3456	Medicaid Fraud & Abuse	(888) 419-3456	Tourism Information	(888) 735-2872
Consumer Services	(800) 435-7352	Health Care Licensing	(850) 488-0595	Medical Practitioners-Complaints	(888) 419-3456	Utilities-Complaints	(800) 342-3552
Corporations	(850) 488-9000	HMO-Complaints	(888) 419-3456	Senate	(850) 487-5229	Vital Statistics	(904) 359-6900
Discrimination Complaints	(800) 342-8170	House of Representatives	(850) 488-1157	State Library	(850) 245-6600	Whistleblower (State Employees)	(800) 543-5353



District 39

State Senator

Larcenia

BULLARD

8603 S. Dixie Highway, Suite 304
Miami, FL 33143

Committee Membership:

- Agriculture, Vice Chair
- Education
- Education Appropriations
- Transportation
- Administrative Procedures